

About Larry Kirk

Chief of Police
Eastern Missouri

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Larry Kirk is the chief of police for a small municipality in eastern Missouri. He previously served as a chief of police in Illinois. Since 1993, he has worked in patrol, special crimes units, gang suppression, two jurisdictional narcotics task forces, and in a college police department. He has been recognized for his work in drug and gang investigations by the DEA, Gulf States High Intensity Trafficking Area (HIDTA), Department of the Air Force, and the Department of Justice. Larry was originally working toward a degree in journalism when an elective course in criminal justice changed his career path. "Law enforcement seemed like the best way to help my community," he says. After 20 years in law enforcement, he realized that prohibition had dented neither demand nor supply of drugs, and he started to question whether drug policies were helping communities. "Drug prohibition creates a criminal atmosphere with a war over territory and product," he explains. "Ending prohibition would bring the ability to properly regulate and monitor a drug trade that occurs in the dark now. It would free the law enforcement officers of this country to target violent crimes and take the money out of the hands of criminal organizations." Larry, who has never used drugs and does not even use caffeine, tobacco or alcohol, is particularly bothered by the recent militarization of police departments. "The idea that we are now a 'paramilitary' organization has been detrimental to our profession," he says. "We have killed innocent people in a rush to keep the 'war on drugs' going. We are now making more and more violent confrontations with our fellow citizens and even the most common citizen now fears us." Larry holds undergraduate degrees from the University of Mississippi and Charter Oak State College in Connecticut and a graduate degree in liberal studies in criminal justice from Fort Hays State University. In addition to his position as police chief, he is a certified police academy instructor and has served locally as an adjunct faculty member.